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# SERMON,

PREACHED ON 10TH AUGUST, 180[illegible]

THE DAY APPOINTED, BY GOVERNMENT,

FOR

A GENERAL F[illegible],

BY

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HALIFAX, NOVA-SCOTIA.

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*The following diſcourſe is not, preciſely, of the kind which the Author ſhould deem moſt worthy of publication: but, in matters of little moment, every man will, ſometimes, rather comply with his friends, than adhere, obſtinately, to his own opinion.*

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# SERMON.

PSALM CXLVII—12.

"*PRAISE THY GOD, O ZION, FOR HE HATH STRENGTHENED THE BARS OF THY GATES.*"

AMONG the Nations of the Eaſt, a diſpoſition has always prevailed to expreſs the ſentiments of piety and devotion by ſome correſpondent external act. Thus a ſacrifice was offered by the ſinner, not as an atonement for his offences, but, as an acknowledgement of his unworthineſs and guilt: a tacit confeſſion that he deſerved, himſelf, to ſuffer that death, which was inflicted on the victim thus ſubſtituted in his room. From the Altar, reared by the hand of the grateful worſhipper, the ſmoke of incenſe aſcended to Heaven, along with the praiſe of his creator, for ſome recent, and ſignal, inſtance

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inſtance of divine goodneſs. And, on occaſion of great calamities, or where ſuch appeared to threaten them, Nations, as well as Individuals, have ſet apart, in token of their humiliation before GOD, certain ſeaſons for ſolemn faſting.

It may not be improper, conſidering the purpoſe for which we are aſſembled, this day, to premiſe a few words on the nature of a Faſt.—The greateſt, and warmeſt, diſputes have ever ariſen from the mereſt trifles. Mankind have often been divided about external ceremonies: yet external ceremonies are of very little conſequence. Whether a man ſhould ſit, or ſtand, or bend the knee, in the preſence of his Maker, when he addreſſes him in the language of praiſe and adoration; whether, or not, he ſhould appoint, for periodical and ſolemn approaches to the throne of Grace, ſome particular day, the twelfth or fourteenth of the moon; whether he ſhould repeat certain prayers, in white garments or black, with his

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head covered or bare, appear, at firſt view, and while the paſſions are yet unenflamed by the heat of controverſy, and the ſtrife of words, matters of the greateſt indifference. That the heart ſhould be ſincere, and the affections truly devout, ſeem, to a man of plain ſenſe, the only circumſtances which, in ſuch caſes, demand our ſerious attention, as what the ALMIGHTY will, undoubtedly, require.

In like manner, in faſting, the external obſervance can be of little conſequence, if conſidered ſeparately from the affections of the mind. An abſtinence from our uſual indulgences may be a proper expreſſion of humiliation: but it can be nothing more. In itſelf it has no claim to merit: it can prove of no avail; it can only be acceptable to Heaven as it is connected with the ſentiments of ſorrow for ſin, and ſincere reſolutions of penitence. "To break the bands of wickedneſs, not to bow down the head like

like a bulrush," saith the spirit of GOD, by the voice of the Prophet, "is the fast that the LORD hath chosen."

We are called upon as individuals, and as members of society who hold the welfare of their country dear, to confess, with deep and unfeigned contrition, our private and our national sins, which might, long ere now, have justly drawn upon us the judgments of Heaven. We should be sensible, indeed we cannot but be sensible, that, in many respects, we have frequently and heinously offended. While we form, therefore, the virtuous resolutions of penitence and amendment for the time to come, let us humbly implore, through the merits of our powerful Mediator, the pardon and remission of the past. Let us pray that the Father of Mercies would deal with us rather "according to the multitude of his tender mercies," than after our own demerits; that he would "still pity us as a father pitieth his children," but forbear

bear to "chaſten us in his wrath," or "viſit us in his hot diſpleaſure." What created being, alas! is able to ſtand before Omnipotence incenſed? When the meaſure of the ſinner's iniquities is full, and he endeavours not, by penitence and reformation, to cancel his tranſgreſſions, or to appeaſe the Judge of the world, if that GOD, whom he appears to brave, but raiſe his voice, in indignation, for a moment, certain deſtruction overtakes him: ſudden and fearful as falls the thunderbolt from heaven. Not on us, O Lord, not on us, ſinners, we confeſs, but repentant ſinners, let the weight of thine indignation fall. We confeſs, with ſorrow, our ſins, and humbly deprecate thy wrath. O thou firſt and laſt, thou greateſt and beſt of beings, what are we? blind, feeble, and erring mortals, creatures of yeſterday: who, tomorrow, ſhall mingle with the duſt from which we ſprung; what are we that thou ſhouldeſt chaſten us in thine anger?

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Is not man but as an atom in thy univerſe; and the ſon of man but as a worm before thee? Or if our own inſignificance be inſufficient to ſhield us from thy wrath, hear, we beſeech thee, the voice of interceſſion from Him whom thou heareſt always; and look on the blood that flowed from the croſs to waſh away the ſins of men and of nations.

Abstinence from food is nothing; nor are any outward marks of humiliation of the leaſt importance, but ſo far as they are undiſſembled and faithful tokens of the affections which prevail within. We have, this day, aſſembled to make confeſſion of our ſins, and to implore, for ourſelves and for our country, the pardon of heaven, and the continuance of that protection and favour, by which, above every other land, ours has been long and eminently diſtinguiſhed. To the prayer of unfeigned piety the God, whom we ſerve, refuſeth not to liſten. But let us beware of deceiving ourſelves;

ourſelves; of "approaching Him with our lips, while our hearts are far from Him." No ſecrets can be hid from His all-ſearching eye. And though he rejecteth not the ſighing of a contrite heart, neither deſireth the death of a ſinner, though He is ready to aid, by His good ſpirit, the ſtruggles of returning virtue, and to receive, like a tender father, with favour and indulgence, His repentant, though prodigal ſon: He cannot view, without indignation, the preſumptuous boldneſs of thoſe weak mortals, who ſubſtitute a ſhew of devotion in the room of ſincere virtue, of good and holy reſolutions, who bow down before Him as it were in mockery, and approach Him "with a lie in their right hand."

The folly of ſuch an attempt can be ſurpaſſed only by its danger. Senſible of guilt, and of frailty, we ſhould ſeek, in all humbleneſs of mind, ſome means of expiating our paſt offences, ſome prop

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to ſuſtain our weakneſs, in time to come, againſt the temptations which ſurround, and will, infallibly, aſſail us. For the faithful diſciple of the Saviour, this atonement and ſupport are abundantly provided. Let us come unto GOD, through him, and every ſtain ſhall be wiped away, with which ſin hath polluted our ſouls. To all, who earneſtly ſolicit it, divine aſſiſtance ſhall be given. To the weak, who are conſcious of their weakneſs yet deſirous of perſevering in virtue, wiſdom and ſtrength ſhall be imparted from on high. By hypocriſy all our former offences ſhall be dyed in indelible crimſon. Inſtead of ſecuring an intereſt in the merits of our Lord, or winning the ſpirit of truth to take up his abode in our hearts; by a ſemblance of piety, while we are ſtrangers to its power, and benign influence, on our temper and conduct, we ſhall quench the ſpirit of GOD, crucify our Redeemer afreſh, and put Him to open

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ſhame. Encumbered with a load of guilt, voluntarily incurred, we may "ſtrive to enter," according to the expreſſion of our LORD, "the ſtrait gate of life: but ſhall find, to our confuſion, that we are finally, and for ever, excluded.

The nature of a ſolemn faſt, then, appears to be the humbling of ourſelves in the preſence of our Creator, attended with the confeſſion of our ſins, an earneſt ſolicitation of pardon, and a faithful and ſteady determination to amend our lives. As an individual learns, in the hard ſchool of affliction, to reflect on thoſe blemiſhes in his character, which the dazzling ſunſhine of proſperity had wholly prevented him from diſcerning: ſo ſocieties and nations, who, bleſſed with a long train of fortunate events, are almoſt ready to forget GOD, when calamity overtakes, or appears to menace them, call to mind, with profound regret, their national iniquities; and the

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nation, like the individual, conſcious of guilt, and humbled by chaſtiſement, ſinks, in the duſt, before her Judge, and ſeeks, by humble ſupplications, to avert, or to mitigate, the ſentence of avenging juſtice.

It hath ſeemed good to the infinite wiſdom of the Supreme Diſpoſer of Events, that an appearance, without example in the hiſtory of the world, ſhould draw the notice and aſtoniſhment of the preſent generation. In the heart of the civiliſed countries of the earth a terrible republic hath ariſen, that wielding, in bloody hands, the ſword of deſolation, ſeemed, for a time, to have baniſhed mercy and humanity from her territories; and has been, in the commencement and progreſs of her career, hoſtile, both in principle and conduct, to the peace, and eſtabliſhed order, of every neighbouring ſociety. Many nations have, indeed, been unjuſt and oppreſſive in their public meaſures; but

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it was reſerved for our times to witneſs a great people governed by rulers profeſſedly void of the fear of GOD, and glorying in having ſhaken off every religious and moral reſtraint.

Her emiſſaries have been but too ſucceſsful in diſſeminating the principles of licentiouſneſs and ſedition; and the ſucceſs of her intrigues, and of her arms, has diffuſed, to a fearful extent, the reign of republican oppreſſion. In every country, into which her citizens have found their way, their rapacity and rage ſeemed then only to be ſatiated when there was nothing left to plunder or deſtroy. Other oppreſſors have contented themſelves with ſtripping the nations they had conquered of the goods of this world; thoſe patrons of freedom, equality and rights, with an atrocity unknown before, have, in addition to every other ſpecies of pillage, ſought to rob men of the conſolations of religion.

gion, and leave them to perish without hope.

Do I mean then to call upon you, this day, to join in those vehement exclamations, which have become so fashionable, against our perfidious and unprincipled enemies? I have no such intention. The truths of the gospel, dissuasives from sin, and exhortations to the practice of the christian virtues, are topics suitable to this place; but I cannot think so of those essays at declamatory eloquence, on the irreligion and wickedness of a nation at war with ours, which have, of late, so frequently disgraced the pulpit. "Bless, but curse not," was, of old, the rule of a christian's conduct. Since the commencement of the present troubles, it seems, by the abuse and invectives which have fallen from christian Ministers, as if their tongues had itched for liberty to curse their enemies. The crimes which have disgraced the national character of our turbulent

neighbours

neighbours, and the misfortunes which have darkened the face of their unhappy country, are more proper objects of pity than of malediction; rather than imprecations of vengeance they call for humble petitions to the throne of grace, that it would pleaſe the Almighty to turn the hearts of the Rulers, or to reſcue the people from their ferocious dominion, and eſtabliſh, in their land, ſome rational and permanent government. It is not to the ſins, nor to the unhappineſs of our neighbours, but to our own felicity, and the gratitude it demands, I would, this day, direct your attention.

In diſcourſing from the words of the Pſalmiſt, I have choſen for the ſubject of our meditation at this time "Praiſe GOD, O Zion, for He hath ſtrengthened the bars of thy gates". I ſhall conſider,

1ſt. The reaſons we have to praiſe GOD that He hath ſtrengthened the bars of our gates.

2d.

2d. The beſt methods of teſtifying our gratitude to heaven for its mercies, private and national.

Firſt: I am to conſider the reaſons we have to bleſs GOD for having "ſtrengthened the bars of our gates."

The appearances which, for many years, the world has exhibited, tend to impreſs, on the minds of our countrymen, above every other ſentiment, gratitude to GOD for the unequalled privileges which, through his goodneſs, it has been given them to enjoy. While one State has been ſubdued, and another degraded: while reſiſtance, or the ſhew of it, has drawn on ſome countries rapine and maſſacre, in every hideous form, and ill-timed alliance and fraternity have reduced others to the baſeſt ſervitude, we have continued to hurl proud defiance at the enemy of all nations. We have never dreaded their boaſted power, nor their more formidable craft: nor have we, for one moment,

ment, ſubmitted to their inſolence. It is, ſurely, ſubject of thankfulneſs to GOD, that, amid the political wrecks of the world, our country continues to enjoy her lofty pre-eminence, in freedom and independence, above every ſurrounding nation.

LET us appeal to the underſtanding of any reaſonable man, who is competent to judge of the ſubject, to what are the nations of Europe indebted for the portion of liberty they have ſtill preſerved? To what is it owing that ſome have ſucceſsfully reſiſted that all-graſping power, before which the weakneſs of many States has been forced to bow? By what means has our country, in particular, the favored aſylum of freedom and of order, been enabled to defy the attempts of her enemies, and to deride every hoſtile preparation? The great inſtrument of general preſervation, in the hand of Divine Providence, has been the Britiſh fleet. The ALMIGHTY

"hath

" hath ſtrengthened the bars of our gates." He hath poured the tide of waters around our coaſts. In the ordinations of His wiſe and good Providence He hath given, to our country, the dominion of that turbulent element. Her ſhips, her own bulwark, in every evil day, have, ſince the commencement of the preſent troubles, fought the battles of the world. They have wafted protection from ſhore to ſhore. Their ſails, ſeen afar off, have been, in diſtant lands, the ſignal of ſafety. Wherever they came they have ſtruck the enemies of our country with awe, and inſpired her friends with confidence and hope. Every quarter of the earth hath ſhaken and reſounded with their victorious thunders.

For more than ten years, with a ſhort, and experimental pauſe of deluſive peace, has our country had to contend againſt a power, formidable in numbers, and, ſince the ſubverſion of her monarchy, diſtinguiſhed

diſtinguiſhed by the courage of enthuſiaſm, which naturally cleaves to a military republic. Twice, in that time, has a powerful army of the enemy, ſtationed over-againſt our coaſts, countenanced the revival of their cuſtomary menace of invaſion. Could their countleſs myriads have poured into the Britiſh territories, I am not willing to ſuppoſe that our national independence would either have been loſt, or endangered: but almoſt every family in the land muſt have mourned the effects of the ſanguinary conteſt, the loſs of many thouſands of brave men: a loſs which a long ſeries of years could have but imperfectly repaired. And whatever the pride of patriotiſm may ſuggeſt, the events of war are extremely uncertain; the period is paſt, GOD be praiſed, but there was a period, when the attempts of our enemies would have been ſeconded, there is reaſon to fear, by many of the factious, and ſeditious, among ourſelves; foreign force,

force, had the projected invaſion, in an evil hour, ſucceeded, muſt have drenched our country in the blood of its inhabitants, and, aided by domeſtic treaſon, might have accompliſhed the ſubverſion of our invaluable conſtitution.

Our country may ſtill be attacked; our foes may enter our land; and much of the blood of our countrymen may be ſhed. But, thanks to the goodneſs of Providence, we enjoy one ſignal conſolation. Our enemies, if they come at all, muſt *ſteal* into our territories; for ſhould the hoſtile fleets encounter on the ocean, they are ſenſible we can have but little reaſon to tremble for the fortune of the day.

Few, perhaps, conſider, with the gratitude ſo juſtly due to the merciful providence of GOD, their own ſhare in the general protection extended to the country. That we live, and enjoy life, that our rights, as men, and our privileges, as citizens, are continued to us, we owe to the

the infinite goodneſs of Him who "hath ſtrengthened the bars of our gates." I have reprobated the idea of groundleſs, or violent, declamation. But, in "the words of truth and ſoberneſs" it may be affirmed, that the ſyſtem of oppreſſive anarchy, which the French have introduced at home, which they have laboured to diffuſe among the nations of the earth, and which we are ſtruggling to avert, has been productive of misfortunes wherever it has got eſtabliſhed, and with misfortunes will, probably, be attended wherever it ſhall go. When the waters of bitterneſs are abroad, no man can tell whether he may not be fated to drink them. When the ſword is once unſheathed, it is impoſſible to determine on whoſe head it is next to fall. Every man, therefore, in every ſtation, has reaſon to bleſs, and to praiſe the moſt High, for life itſelf, and the various comforts of life, while he knows that ſo many thouſands, in almoſt every other

other nation, have either been hurried out of the world, or left to drag on a wretched exiſtence, ſtripped of every thing, that was dear or valuable, and involved in much confuſion, and multiplied diſtreſſes.

The mercy of GOD, in "ſtrengthening the bars of our gates," hath not only preſerved to us our property, and lives, but hath protected our national independence, and ſecured to us our freedom, and our rights, as ſubjects of this highly privileged, and highly diſtinguiſhed empire. To thoſe among you, who have been enabled to compare our ſituation, in this reſpect, with that of others, inhabitants of countries leſs favored, it is needleſs to obſerve how much the happy frame of our political conſtitution has been the theme of praiſe, and the ſubject of admiration; how often the moſt judicious of men have held it up to the envy, and ambition, of the neighbouring States. It

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was, in truth, in queſt of ſuch a conſtitution our neighbours embarked on the wide ocean of political experiment. The extremes, into which they have been hurried, the ceaſeleſs variations in the form of their democracy, the recent eſtabliſhment among them of a complete and haughty deſpotiſm, the death, the diſperſion, and depreſſed ſituations, of ſo many thouſands of valuable, and virtuous, men of that country, ſhould endear to us a conſtitution, venerable by age, by glory, and tried uſefulneſs, and ſhould convince us that what they have exerted themſelves, ſtrenuouſly, but ineffectually, to obtain, deſerves to be greatly prized, and vigorouſly defended.

The preſervation of our religious privileges, is another reaſon for thankfulneſs to GOD. No man, it is true, can be deprived of the hopes, or the conſolations, which religion ſupplies, without his own conſent. An expreſſion has found it's way into the ſpeeches, and public

public writings, of ſome of our countrymen, of which I cannot approve. It has been ſaid that the French, in their revolutionary fury, had aboliſhed chriſtianity. This is ſurely ſaid without conſideration. To aboliſh chriſtianity is no work for man. The enemies of the chriſtian religion may perſecute it's friends: or its profeſſed friends may bring diſgrace on their profeſſion, by their unworthy, or fanatical, conduct. But the truths of GOD are forever; and "the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt them." The civil ſupports, which man has lent chriſtianity, man may, indeed, withdraw. The intereſts of real religion could ſuffer but little by the ſubverſion of the political hierarchy recently eſtabliſhed in France, by it's unbelieving ruler. But pure and undefiled religion, the ſentiment which inſpires active virtue, and animates it to exertion, by glorious hopes, is beyond the reach of man, and bids defiance to

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the groſſneſs of his violence, the ferocity of his perſecution. Was not chriſtianity fiercely, and warmly, oppoſed *in* it's riſe and progreſs? Were not the Apoſtles of the Lord perſecuted from city to city? Was not the Saviour of the World, the bleſſed founder of our religion, nailed to a croſs? But did ſuch violence of oppoſition aboliſh chriſtianity? Without the aid of the civil power, and in ſpite of its bittereſt oppoſition, the chriſtian religion made it's way in the world; let us hope, and truſt, it may maintain its ground without the props of civil ſupport. While there are men in a nation, be their number great or ſmall, who cheriſh, in their hearts, the fear of GOD, the faith of CHRIST, and the love of every thing praiſe-worthy, juſt and true, chriſtianity is not, totally, extinguiſhed in that land; and, however reſpectable the national proviſion, for the ſupport of religion, may be, vital chriſtianity is gone, where corruption

tion and depravity have become univerſal.

But, although religion made it's way, and may keep its ground, independently of the aids of civil authority, it is, certainly, a ſubject of praiſe and thankfulneſs to GOD, that the chriſtian church is left to enjoy peace, and freed from all fear of perſecution. It is natural to admire that holy firmneſs which exulted in the croſs of CHRIST, amid the flames: but how few are equal to this fiery trial? how few can ſay, with certainty, that the weakneſs of nature would not have prevailed over the hope of a happineſs unſeen, and the internal conviction of the heart? Not wiſhing to exaggerate the crimes of the moſt licentious of mankind, I muſt ſay I do not believe that many, in the preſent age, have been perſecuted for religion's ſake. In times of tumult men perpetrate atrocities they hardly know why. Men there were, undoubtedly, among

among the Clergy of France, of great talents, and exalted worth, inhumanly put to death; as well as thoufands of the unfortunate inhabitants of their convents, who, ignorant, in general, of the politics, and the wickednefs, of the world, were, moft of them, it is probable, fincerely religious. But the courtiers, and nobility, were alfo put to death, not furely for the fake of their religion. *Their* ſtock of religion was not ſo great that they ſhould deſerve, on that account, to die. Had our enemies ſucceeded, when they threatened us with invaſion ſome years ago, there can be no doubt but they would have attempted the ſubverſion of all our eſtabliſhments: and this muſt have diſturbed the quiet profeſſion of religion, and the periodical returns of the public worſhip of GOD; we have reaſon to praiſe the ALMIGHTY, that our country has been ſhielded from ſuch formidable evils.

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SUCH are the motives we have for cultivating gratitude towards our heavenly protector, and approaching him with the voice of praiſe, while we reflect that his power hath been employed to "ſtrengthen the bars of our gates." In fruſtrating the deſigns of the foreign, and domeſtic, foes of our Zion, he hath, hitherto, enſured to us perſonal ſafety, our wordly poſſeſſions, our political privileges, the quiet and peaceable profeſſion of our religion, and the undiſturbed obſervance of every duty towards GOD, which conſcience requires us to perform. I proceed,

Secondly: To ſay ſomething of the beſt methods of teſtifying our gratitude to heaven, for it's mercies, private and national:

1. A wiſe and enlightened man, it is probable, to whom ſuch a choice had been granted, would not have pitched upon the preſent age, as the moſt deſirable period of exiſtence. Days of quiet have

have preceded, and may ſucceed, the exiſting troubles. Our fathers, for more than a century, have enjoyed comparative tranquility. We, or our children, may, yet, rejoice in the bleſt return of peace. At preſent every conſiderate mind is kept in painful ſuſpenſe, about the iſſue of a conteſt of unequalled magnitude, which embraces the intereſt of every man, in every department of life: wherein each eſtimable poſſeſſion, each delightful hope, all that the heart can love, or the underſtanding can value, is at hazard, and muſt, ſhould we fail, be ſwept, indiſcriminately, away, in the torrent of public ruin. The preſent times, are times of alarm, inceſſantly renewed, and of danger that muſt be vigorouſly reſiſted. Againſt that portion of evil with which eternal wiſdom may ſee fit, for the paſſing hour, to afflict us, we muſt endeavour to ſteel our hearts: for they who cannot bear pain and labour, with fortitude,

tude, are unworthy, and, perhaps, incapable, of taſting pleaſure or repoſe. It is the will of GOD that we ſhould be called upon to witneſs, perhaps to bear a part in ſuch ſcenes; and who ſhall dare to arraign the wiſdom of his decrees? One certain method of glorifying our Creator, is humble reſignation to His will.

2. ANOTHER method of teſtifying our gratitude to GOD for His paſt mercies, is an unſhaken truſt in the continuance of His protecting favour. That the ALMIGHTY hath reſpect to the virtuous who dwell in the land, that He is inclined to ſpare even a guilty nation, in which many of His faithful ſervants are found, are principles undeniably laid down in the ſacred books. "For the ſake of ten righteous perſons I will ſpare the city," was His declaration to His ſervant of old. With Him, who changeth not, we can have no reaſon to doubt but the ſame regard continues

tinues to uprightneſs of heart, and unaffected piety. In the nation to which we belong, although licentiouſneſs and vice be, unhappily, too prevalent, thouſands are ſtill left who practiſe, without oſtentation, every ſublime and every amiable virtue. Among us may be found whatever is great or venerable. in wiſdom or in piety, in undaunted heroiſm, or unſhaken integrity. The good and virtuous, the accepted ſervants of the moſt High, however humble their ſtation upon the earth may be, are the patriots who "ſtand as a wall of fire around our Zion." When the ruler of nations is ready to ſend forth, in his wrath, an exterminating Angel among a guilty race, he remembers the juſt and pious who dwell among them, and His anger is converted into tender mercy.

Shall we deſpond in the preſent ſtate of our county? Shall we raſhly diſtruſt the care of an over-ruling Providence, which hath upheld her in many

a perilous, and ſanguinary, conteſt? Can the ſun, which but now ſhone, with more than meridian ſplendour, ſet ſo ſuddenly to riſe no more? Shall the means of ſelf-defence be wanting, to-morrow, to a nation which, yeſterday, ſpread her covering wings over every region of the earth, where there was either ſpirit to deſire her protection, or ſtrength to co-operate with her friendly efforts: to whoſe exertions, alone, it is owing that thoſe very States, who have kept coldly aloof from the hazards of the conteſt, have their rights, or their neutrality, reſpected?

"IT is good to hope, and quietly wait, for the ſalvation of the LORD." In his mercy the means of our ſafety will be found. There are heads and hands, ſpirit and virtue, vigour and concord, in our land, ſufficient to cope with force, or fraud, to repel invaſion, and to cruſh conſpiracy.

3. Not with our lips, but in our lives,

lives, does it behove us to praiſe the moſt High. By lives conformable to His holy commandments, to the precepts, and the ſpirit, of the Goſpel of His Son, by the ſincere renunciation of every ſinful habit, by firm reſolutions of future integrity, and undiſſembled piety, it becomes us to glorify GOD. How much are they miſtaken who would make religion a matter of ſpeculation merely! He who acts juſtly, becauſe he fears GOD, who conſiders the caſe of the poor for CHRIST's ſake, who reſpects, in man, the image of his Maker, and trembles at the thought of oppreſſing, or trampling upon, the likeneſs of GOD, who adminiſters to the wants, and conſoles the ſorrows, of his needy, or afflicted brethren, "doing good, and communicating," becauſe he knows that, with ſuch ſacrifices, GOD is well pleaſed, is a man under the influence of genuine religion: the religion of the new Teſtament, and of CHRIST. But

is he religious, who is oftentatioully ſo? Do a ſour face, a noiſy zeal, empty profeſſions, and a phariſaical ſtiffneſs of demeanour, conſtitute a religious character? Of him, who makes an oſtentation of piety, who faſts that he may be ſeen, and prays that he may be heard of men, hath not our Lord declared, "verily he hath his reward.?"

My brethren, from the bulk of you, I expect better things. You have not ſo learned CHRIST. Trained in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, you have been taught that "GOD looketh to the heart, not to the outward appearance;" and that he "who nameth the name of JESUS, ſhould depart from iniquity." You have been taught to dread alike that arrogance of ſelf-ſufficiency, that diſdains the proffered aid of the Redeemer of Mankind, and the fanaticiſm, and phariſaical pretenſions, which diſgrace his religion. If the deluſions of pride ſhall ſeduce you, to the right hand,

or to the left, no deſcription of chriſtians can be leſs excuſable. Few, or none of you, can plead ignorance, in palliation of your errors. For you can diſcern, with eaſe, the emptineſs and vanity of every groundleſs, however lofty, pretenſion, by recurring to the pure, and practical, principles of the religion of your fathers, in which you were early inſtructed. I pray GOD I may always ſee you ſteady in the principles, and faithful in the practice, of rational religion. It is, in this way, that a chriſtian, and a candidate for immortal life, ſhould glorify Him who hath imparted reaſon, and cauſed the ſun of rig'teouſneſs to ſhine upon him. Ours is a reaſonable ſervice.

4. Of him who would, unfeignedly, return to GOD, it is, indiſpenſibly, required that he reſpect His laws. He who worſhips the LORD of life, in ſincerity, ſhould endeavour, alſo, to practiſe the virtues with diligence. In a mo-

ral

ral manner, the ALMIGHTY governs the univerſe he hath created. The rewards of perſeverance, and the chaſtiſement of obſtinate perverſeneſs, ſhall be revealed hereafter; but had we been left without the precious light of divine revelation, we muſt ſtill have diſcovered that many virtues tended to produce permanent good, and many vices permanent evil. In this reſpect we have been, I am afraid, extremely deficient in proofs of gratitude for private or national mercies. Of the moſt favoured nation upon earth, there is not, perhaps, a more highly favoured province than that in which we dwell. While many other lands have been viſited, with great and afflictive evils, we have enjoyed a diſtinguiſhed exemption. The thunder of war hath ſhaken the nations, but we have heard only it's diſtant echo. Peſtilence hath raged in our neighbourhood, while health abode with us. This fortunate province hath enjoyed an abundance

dance of the neceſſaries, and comforts, of life, while famine preſſed ſore on thouſands in the mother country. In return, for ſo many bleſſings, are we the moral people we ought to be? If atrocious crimes are unknown, or unfrequent, among us, are we not more ſenſual, more worldly, more luxurious, than we ought to be? Are not drunkenneſs, profaneneſs and blaſphemy, daily to be ſeen, and heard, in our ſtreets? Is not an oſtentatious, expenſive, dangerous levity, the characteriſtic of our people? Are not miſery, and indigence, too often the fruits of vice? Are we not, annually, taxed for the ſupport of unprincipled wretches, whoſe poverty is of their own procuring? And is it not a fact, that ſome of them have been heard to boaſt, while expending, in riot, the earnings of temporary labour, that that they had ſtill a reſource in the public charity? The means of rectifying ſuch abuſes I preſume not to point out.

out. But if expedients can be diſcovered for that purpoſe, it is pity they ſhould not be ſpeedily corrected. To reform a community is an arduous, and almoſt a hopeleſs, undertaking. But if every one of us, according to a trite, but juſt, obſervation, would take pains to amend one, the nation would be ſoon, and completely, reformed.

Such, it ſeems to me, are, in few words, the beſt methods of teſtifying our gratitude to GOD, for His goodneſs: chearful reſignation to His will, unſhaken confidence in His divine protection, the relinquiſhment of every ſinful habit, ſteady reſiſtance of ſurrounding temptations, and the faithful diſcharge, towards our brethren of mankind, of every moral, and ſocial, duty.

FINIS.